

ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT
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Another Espionage Case

RICHARD THRELKELD: FBI Director William Webster has already called 1985 the year of the spy. Well, the latest American charged with spying showed up in court.

ABC's Kenneth Walker looks at the accused man and the case the government is making against him.

KENNETH WALKER: Randy Miles Jeffries was a financially troubled man with a history of drug abuse and mental problems, according to court records. After a year of unemployment, odd jobs and welfare, Jeffries went to work last month as a delivery man with this stenographic firm. It transcribed classified testimony before the House Armed Services Committee.

Nine days ago, federal agents say, they saw Jeffries visit the Soviet Embassy's military office. An undercover FBI agent posing as a Soviet later called Jeffries and lured him to this downtown hotel, where the arrest was made Friday night.

According to court papers, Jeffries claimed to have met with real Soviet agents twice before, and said once he gave them papers marked "Top Secret." He allegedly claimed to have a bag full of documents which had been torn by hand and discarded. He is said to have offered the papers in exchange for \$5000.

But at court today, Jeffries' lawyer, Allen Dale, challenged the government's case, suggesting that Jeffries' claims were just idle boasts intended to dupe the Soviets out of money.

ALLEN DALE: There's been no attempt on Mr. Jeffries' behalf to deliver documents and there've been no documents delivered, according to him. The FBI certainly doesn't have any documents right now.

WALKER: During the hearing, U.S. Magistrate Jeanne Dwyer said the government's case barely met minimum standards. Dwyer told the prosecutors, "This is as thin an affair as it's been my misfortune to see." Dwyer warned the prosecutors that by tomorrow,

when she must rule on a bail request, that, quote, "I want a lot more meat."

If Jeffries did have secrets for sale, investigators hope to learn how a low-level employee with such a troubled background could have access to classified documents.

THRELKELD: Meanwhile in Baltimore today, another accused spy, Ronald Pelton, pleaded not guilty to charges that he sold secrets to the Soviets. Pelton is a former employee of the top secret National Security Agency. A trial was set for March 24th.